



ELECTRICAL CURRENTS

Newsletter from the Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector

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Vol. 7 No. 10

October 2004

● Electrical Stakeholder Meetings Will Be Scheduled In 11 Locations

During November, December and January we will have central office staff (the Chief or Technical Specialists, and the Administrative Staff) available for information sharing and questions at electrical stakeholder meetings in **Tumwater** (November 3rd), **Yakima** (November 15th), **Kennewick** (November 16th), **Pullman** (November 17th), **Spokane** (November 18th), **Tukwila** (December 7th), **Everett** (December 8th), **Mount Vernon** (December 9th), **Tacoma** (December 15th), **Bremerton** (December 16th), and **Vancouver** (January 5th). The meetings will be scheduled from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM and will not include formal technical instruction or electrical CEU's. The locations will be announced on the Electrical Listserv and at the Regional Service Location offices. If you are interested in attending, please join the Listserv at: <http://www.lni.wa.gov/Main/Listservs/Electrical.asp>

● Trainees Have A Time Limit For Submitting Affidavits Of Experience

A trainee must submit an affidavit of experience for all work performed in the previous certification period within 30 days of renewing the training certificate. Affidavits processed outside of this window have an additional processing fee (\$44.90) and may not be verifiable (acceptable) for training credit. Make sure your affidavits are accurate. WAC 296-46B-985(4) establishes a civil penalty and a reduction of up to 2,000 training hours for making a false statement or material misrepresentation on an affidavit.

● Outdoor Receptacles Accessible From Grade Level

What is acceptable as accessible at grade level? NEC 210-52(E) requires at least one receptacle outlet, not more than 2.0 m (6½ ft) above grade level, to be installed at the front and back of the dwelling. "Accessible at grade level" does not mean that the receptacle must be reached while your feet are on the ground. If an exterior deck has steps that provide access directly to the ground, an outside GFCI protected receptacle on the deck will satisfy the requirement and allow the user safe access to electricity. To answer the question "How high can the deck be above grade?" we will apply the existing 6½ ft limitation already in the code.

● Interim WAC Rule Revisions Will Be Effective November 22, 2004

The emergency rules effective August 2nd (posted in the August 2004 edition of this newsletter) and two other revisions in the interim package will be effective November 22, 2004. The complete text of these revisions is on our Web site at: <http://www.lni.wa.gov/LawRule/WhatsNew/Proposed/default.asp>. The interim changes cover:

- Specific like-in-kind sign maintenance included in the Class A basic electrical work category.
- General or specialty administrator or electrician certification or status as a qualified apprenticeship instructor qualifies instructor applicants for continuing education instructor approval.
- The term "independent electrical power producer" is formally defined in relation to exempt status.
- A provisional electrical work permit label is created to allow electrical work to begin immediately and follow-up with a normal permit within two working days. (More details will be covered in future issues of this newsletter.)

● Class B Basic Electrical Inspection Labels

Class B basic electrical work permits were created to reduce the cost to the customer for "Electrical work that requires minimal electrical circuit modifications and has limited exposure hazards." The definition of Class B basic electric work is in RCW 19.28.006 and the specific rules for use of Class B labels are found in WAC 296-46B-110(6) through (10). The labels are sold in a book of 20 for \$200. After being purchased, they can be split up and dispersed throughout the contractor's crew.

Each label has two parts; both parts must be filled out before the work is begun. The jobsite part must be affixed to the panel before starting the installation. The contractor part must be sent to the address printed on the label within 15 working days from the initial use. Once filled out the Class B label is an active permit and is then subject to a random inspection process.

Examples of work that can be done under a Class B label are: installing two surface or fished outlets to an existing bedroom circuit, adding an outdoor receptacle to an existing circuit, replacing a unit heater with a "like in kind" heater, or replacing a motor larger than ten horsepower. Refer to RCW 19.28.005(12) for the definition of "like in kind". There are no refunds on Class B labels. If you apply a Class B label on work that is not allowed or use them in error in another inspection jurisdiction, you will be responsible for purchasing a standard permit and will forfeit the value of the Class B label.

● Satellite Dishes – Telecommunications Work

The most common question we get about telecommunications installations involves customer satellite dish and conventional antenna systems receiving a telecommunications service provider's signal. All receiving equipment is on the customer side of the telecommunications network demarcation point and under the jurisdiction of RCW 19.28.400 and .420. A telecommunications contractor license is required for firms that do this work, including all or part of the dish (antenna) installation, cabling from the dish to the structure, and installation of the necessary conductors and interface equipment in or on the building.

Installations in one- and two-family dwellings and within the units of multi-family dwellings are exempt from the permitting and inspection. Permits and inspections are required (in other than one- and two-family dwellings) for installations of greater than 10 telecom outlets, for all backbone installations, and all fire barrier penetrations. A rooftop (or surface) dish system is a backbone installation (and most likely a penetration of a fire barrier) and requires permitting and inspection in other than one- and two-family dwellings.

● Protect Your Investment – Verify Your Contractor, Electrician, or Plumber Is Legal

A new "**Look Up a Contractor, Electrician or Plumber**" site was launched June 30, 2004. This site provides customers with the ability to verify construction and electrical contractors and tradesmen in the Plumbing and Electrical fields. Contractors should use this site to verify the certification status of their current (or potential) electrician or trainee employees to avoid the possibility of receiving citations for employing uncertified or expired persons. Electricians, Administrators and Master Electricians can check to see what courses have been credited to their record(s) for continuing education requirements. The site can be visited by clicking on the link "**Look Up a Contractor, Plumber or Electrician**" located on the Labor and Industries Web site at: <http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Contractors/HireCon/>.

● Update. 2004-2005 Chapter 296-46B WAC – Rule Process

The 2004-2005 electrical rule revision process has begun. You can monitor the schedule, proposals and actions on the Electrical Listserv (www.lni.wa.gov/Main/Listservs/Electrical.asp). The members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) were notified October 1st and announced October 7th. Proposals for change will be accepted until October 15th. The TAC will meet on November 10th and 11th to consider action on proposals. About November 17th the report on proposals will be published (Electrical Listserv) for a public review and formal comment period that ends on December 1st. The department will present the final draft to the Electrical Board at their January 27th meeting. Tentatively, public hearings will be held in early April, adopted in late April, and effective date on June 30, 2005.

● Electrical Question of the Month

This Month's Question: "Like-in-kind" means having similar characteristics such as voltage requirements, current draw and function, and being in the same place. Like-in-kind replacement of which of the following equipment requires an electrical work permit and inspection? **A)** 7½ HP, 240V motor, **B)** household electric water heater, **C)** both A) and B), **D)** neither A) or B).

Last Month's Question: The required grounding conductor for metal television satellite dish receiving antennas and metal structures supporting them must be connected to the grounding electrode system of the building or structure served with a conductor not smaller than **A)** 12 AWG copper, **B)** 10 AWG copper, **C)** 8 AWG copper, **D)** 6 AWG copper. The answer is **B)** [NEC 810.21(H) and 821.58(A)]